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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3631
INFO RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN IMMEDIATE 1470
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE 8279
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 0727
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ JUL 9551
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA IMMEDIATE 6383
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE 0328
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE 2043
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 1337
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE 7054
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE 2406
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 002568

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECIN](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [SNAR](#) [KJUS](#) [CO](#)
VE, BR, BL, EC
SUBJECT: ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHANNON'S JULY 7 MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT URIBE

Classified By: Ambassador William R. Brownfield
Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) Assistant Secretary Shannon conveyed President Bush's gratitude to President Uribe for the Colombian military's successful rescue of the three U.S. and twelve Colombian hostages held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The operation reflects the transformation that has occurred in Colombia under Uribe's leadership. Uribe said the GOC remains committed to boosting the military pressure on FARC and National Liberation Army (ELN) senior leaders. The GOC is ready to seek direct contact with the FARC, but is not optimistic about the results. Uribe said he will ask for Venezuelan cooperation to arrest FARC leaders residing in Venezuela in his July 11 meeting with President Chavez, but expects few results. He agreed with Shannon's request that the GOC work with the United States to raise the political cost paid by Chavez for his support to the FARC. Uribe asked Shannon to pass on to the U.S. Congress that passage of the Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement would help Colombia deal with its current economic difficulties, and voiced interest in concluding an agreement on a Cooperative Security Location (CSL) in Colombia as soon as possible. End Summary

¶2. (U) Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon, Commander, Special Operations Command South, Brigadier General Charles Cleveland, Ambassador William R. Brownfield, Colonel Gregory Wilson, and Polcouns (notetaker) met on July 7 with President Alvaro Uribe, Armed Forces Commander General Freddy Padilla, Army Commander General Mario Montoya, Vice Foreign Minister Camilo Reyes, presidential Private Secretary Alicia Arango, and presidential Communications Director Jorge Mario Eastman at the Casa de Narino.

United States Proud to be Ally of Colombia

¶3. (U) A/S Shannon conveyed President Bush's and Secretary Rice's gratitude for Colombia's successful rescue of the

three American hostages held by the FARC, as well as Ingrid Betancourt and eleven Colombian security personnel. The remarkable operation reflected the transformation which has occurred in Colombia under Uribe's leadership. The United States is proud to have Colombia as an ally. Uribe thanked Shannon for his remarks, and said U.S. assistance was crucial in upgrading the Colombian military's capacity to conduct such operations. He singled out Ambassador Brownfield for special praise, noting that the Ambassador's support for the operation had encouraged him to proceed with the mission.

Need to Maintain Pressure on FARC and ELN

14. (C) Uribe said the GOC remains committed to maintaining military pressure on the FARC and the ELN. The GOC is ready to seek direct contact with the FARC, but is not optimistic this will lead to progress on peace. Uribe said that in reaching out to the FARC, the GOC must avoid undermining the morale of the Colombian military. Previous Colombian governments' attempts to engage armed groups in political dialogue had weakened the military's resolve. His main contribution has been to reassure the military that their efforts to defeat the FARC enjoy the GOC's complete support. Any dialogue with the FARC must not create uncertainty within the military about the GOC's will to continue the fight against the group. Hence, Uribe said he could not heed Betancourt's call to moderate his language criticizing the group. The FARC is a terrorist group, and the world needs to understand this.

15. (C) Uribe said the GOC has taken three decisions to boost the pressure on the terrorist groups. First, the GOC decided to facilitate the extradition of captured FARC commanders "Cesar" and "Enrique Gafas" to the United States. Second, on July 7 the GOC had informed the three European countries -- France, Spain and Switzerland -- that it was terminating their facilitation role with the FARC. Uribe had explained to the three countries' ambassadors that the GOC respected their efforts, but had lost confidence in Swiss mediator Jean Pierre Gontard and French envoy Noel Saez due to their "suspicious links with the FARC." Lastly, Uribe said the Colombian military would increase operations against ELN leaders, especially Pablo Beltran and Antonio Garcia, to show the group that it could not continue to "mock" the Colombian people. The GOC would also continue operations targeting FARC Secretariat members Mono Jojoy, Ivan Marquez, and Alfonso Cano.

16. (C) Shannon said the United States understood his decision to end the European facilitation role, and agreed on the need to continue military action against the FARC and ELN. He stressed that the international community should focus on supporting Colombia's democratic state, not on acting as a mediator in talks between the GOC and terrorist groups.

Venezuela, President Chavez and the FARC

17. (C) Uribe said he would be "prudent" in his July 11 meeting with Venezuelan President Chavez. He would reiterate the GOC's belief that two FARC Secretariat members, Ivan Marquez and Timochenko, reside in Venezuela and would ask for Venezuela's help to locate and arrest them. He expected Chavez to respond cordially, but did not believe that Chavez would act against FARC and ELN leaders operating out of Venezuela. Shannon said Chavez' recent comments urging the FARC to release its kidnap victims and give up the armed struggle, while positive, were tactical and did not reflect a fundamental change in Venezuela's support for the group. He said it remains important to look for ways to raise the political cost paid by Chavez for his support to the FARC and the ELN, and urged Colombia to coordinate closely with the United States on Venezuelan issues.

Brazil, Ecuador and Bolivia

18. (C) Shannon noted that Brazilian President Lula da Silva

would visit Colombia later in July, and urged Uribe to engage the Brazilians more actively on bilateral and regional issues. Shannon said his message to Brasilia had been that Brazil's vision of an integrated South America depends on cooperation with the dynamic economies of Colombia, Peru, and Chile--not Venezuela and Ecuador. Brazil missed an opportunity at the Organization of American States (OAS) in March, when it showed more concern for abstract notions of sovereignty than for the real security needs of 44 million Colombians. Uribe agreed greater Colombian engagement with Brazil would be useful, and said he had invited Lula and Peruvian President Garcia to attend Colombia's independence day parade in Leticia on July 20. Lula would spend the previous day in Bogota.

¶9. (C) Asked by Uribe for the U.S. take on Ecuador, Shannon said the USG continues to urge President Correa to reestablish diplomatic ties with Bogota. Uribe's meeting with Chavez would highlight Correa's intransigence on this issue and make him look petty. He added that we continue to engage the Ecuadorians, but were surprised by the depth and level of contacts between Ecuadorian officials and the FARC revealed in the computers seized from Raul Reyes' camp. Colombia and the United States need to work together to make countries pay a high price for their links to the FARC.

¶10. (C) Shannon thanked Uribe for Colombia's participation with Argentina and Brazil in the Group of Friends working to promote a peaceful resolution to Bolivia's domestic conflict. We especially appreciated the GOC's reminder to the Bolivian government that it must meet its Vienna Convention obligation to provide security for diplomatic facilities and personnel. Vice Foreign Minister Camilo Reyes said Colombia remains committed to the Group of Friends, but voiced concern that the situation in Bolivia continues to deteriorate. Shannon agreed the conflict between the lowland departments and La Paz is deepening, and said it is important that Bolivia's neighbors stay engaged.

U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (CTPA)

¶11. (C) Uribe said he understood the CTPA is a domestic political issue in the United States, and will not make public comments about the accord at this time. Still, Colombia's economy faces growing difficulties, including rising inflation, an appreciating peso, and falling consumption. U.S. Congressional approval of the CTPA would help Colombia manage these problems. The CTPA would help Colombia attract foreign investment, boost job creation, and generate additional resources needed to consolidate progress against the terrorist groups. He asked Shannon to pass this message to Congress. Shannon reiterated President Bush's commitment to obtaining congressional passage of the CTPA, and promised to communicate Colombia's concerns to Congress.

Cooperative Security Location (CSL)

¶12. (C) The Ambassador noted our interest in pursuing the establishment of a Cooperative Security Location (CSL) in Colombia if Ecuador does not renew our agreement on Manta. Uribe said the GOC considers the establishment of a CSL a top priority and hopes to conclude an agreement on such a facility as soon as possible.

BROWNFIELD